

**KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 7, 2004**

**STATE BOARD ROOM
1ST FLOOR, CAPITAL PLAZA TOWER
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY**

SUMMARY MINUTES

The Kentucky Board of Education held a regular meeting on September 7, 2004, in the State Board Room, First Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky. The Board conducted the following discussions:

Tuesday, September 7, 2004

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Keith Travis called the Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present for the meeting were Janice Allen, Dorie Combs, Bonnie Lash Freeman, Helen Mountjoy, Hilma Prather, David Tachau, Keith Travis, Janna Vice and David Webb. David Rhodes joined the meeting in progress. Absent from the meeting were Tom Layzell and Jeff Mando.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Keith Travis made the following announcements:

- Welcome was extended to all who attended the meeting.
- Happy birthday was expressed to Bonnie Lash Freeman.
- A reminder was given that the meeting is streaming over the Internet and those viewing the meeting were welcomed.
- The guidelines for participation in Kentucky Board of Education meetings that participants found in their seats are being issued in order to conduct the meeting in an orderly fashion. Participants were asked for their cooperation and support in implementing these guidelines.

***REPORT ON THE EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING***

Chair Travis asked Hilma Prather to comment on the recent meeting of the Education Assessment and Accountability Subcommittee that she attended. Ms. Prather reported that Commissioner Wilhoit did an incredible job presenting to the committee. She explained that he walked through the Seven Steps Forward in Assessment and explained the improvements that will be made to the CATS test through these steps. Prather said that her overriding impression was that these proposals were generally met with a favorable reaction. She went on to say it was expressed these changes were needed and that the legislators were pleased the Department and Board are being responsive to constituent concerns.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Commissioner Wilhoit indicated that he would give a quick overview of the current accountability system to provide a basis for considering changes in the future. His presentation contained the following major points:

- The purpose of the accountability system is to present a valid and reliable measure of school performance against standards over time. Schools are held accountable on the basis of a continuous improvement model and are expected to reach proficiency by 2014.
- Biennial goals are set that must be reached in order to get to proficiency in 2014.
- The system records both standing and growth and measures cohorts of students.
- The components of Kentucky's accountability system are the Kentucky Core Content Tests, a nationally norm-referenced test (CTBS), writing portfolios, on-demand writing prompts and the alternate portfolio. All of these components count to some degree, but by far the greatest weight is given to the Kentucky Core Content Tests.
- The accountability index is created through a number of statistical measures. A national technical panel exists to make sure that the procedures are sound in computing the index. To calculate the accountability index for a given year, each subject area of the test is weighted and a statistical formula is used. The weights differ somewhat at the elementary, middle and high school levels and are reflective of what the state felt was important at the time these were set.
- Every two years a school's goal is reset; a school's growth chart shows the path they must take and goals they must meet to reach proficiency by 2014.
- The growth chart has three areas of status: meeting goal, progressing and assistance.
- Elementary schools are on target to make 100; however, middle schools and high schools are divided as to reaching the 100 goal on time. Overall, we are not seeing as much movement at the high school.

- The accountability model is working and understood by schools. At some point, the Board will have to look at what else to do to assist those schools who are deep within the assistance category.

During the presentation summarized above, the following issues were raised:

- Question: Does CATS data predict college success? Response: CATS does correlate with ACT data, but correlates less with classroom grades.
- Question: Why is the nonacademic data weighted differently at the different levels? Response: The nonacademic data is weighted differently at each level because the Board set the weights that it thought appropriate at the time to emphasize certain factors at certain levels. The Board will probably want to revisit the weights in the future.
- Question: Why was the norm-referenced test weighted 5%? Response: The norm-referenced test was added to the equation due to a concern that came out of the 1998 legislative session where folks wanted some type of national measure. The Board looked at different options, talked with policymakers and concluded that the Kentucky Core Content Test needed to maintain the majority of the weight. The recommendation of the National Technical Advisory Panel for Assessment and Accountability was considered and an analysis was conducted of the amount of the Core Content covered by the norm-referenced test. It was not fair to put a large weight on the norm-referenced test if it only covered a small portion of the Core Content. Five percent was National Technical Advisory Panel for Assessment and Accountability's recommendation.
- Question: To what degree does participation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress test provide national comparison data since all states now have to participate? Response: The issue of NAEP will be critical as we move down the road because it measures the same standards across the nation. It will drive the conversation on how well states are doing. Reading, math and science will be administered at grades 4 and 8 next year. However, this test only assesses a sample of students and not all students in the state.
- Question: Is there the political will to restore rewards? Response: It is too early to determine the answer to this, but it is troubling that these are missing since they are part of a holistic design. However, rewards were problematic in some schools. The field has been quiet about this issue, but it will come to play as the budget is considered in the next round.
- Question: For schools in assistance, what strategies have been most helpful? Response: The Highly Skilled Educator program has produced dramatic short-term improvement in assistance schools with some years 100% of the schools getting out of

the assistance category. Additionally, the audit and review process and the standards and indicators document have made a tremendous impact on the schools.

CONTENT AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Commissioner Wilhoit pointed out the following relative to the concept paper on content and performance standards:

- The review of the standards is now in progress because we don't want to change the rules later down the road.
- We are beginning with mathematics and language arts and will proceed through the other areas.
- The review will align our standards with national standards of the various content area associations to make sure we reflect what people say is important to learn.
- What is critical for students to learn must be identified in this process and we must make sure that the approach and the document is valid and reliable.
- The central goal is to describe more finitely by grade level, and to differentiate in primary and secondary what must be taught. We have experts helping us to do this.

The following comments or questions were raised during the discussion on content and student performance standards:

- Comment: The way that the standards are written must be uniform and must identify what people can stop doing. It is not evident that schools know how to do this right now.
- Comment: It is encouraging to hear that we are going to more clearly define what each grade should be teaching. Perhaps we should address fewer standards but do them in a better manner. There may be too much exposure to material and not enough in-depth coverage to achieve competency.
- Question: Will the revision of the standards dovetail to a finite level of curriculum mapping? Response: We must be very clear about what students should know and be able to do; however, we should not tell schools and districts how to accomplish this. A curriculum map is how to organize a teacher's time over a year to get to what the students should know and be able to do. The state's role is to be clear about what is contained in the Program of Studies and Core Content. For those teachers who feel over their heads, the state needs to provide assistance documents. The worst thing to do to a creative teacher is to prescribe how they must teach.

- Question: What are the next steps in altering or collapsing documents? Response: The documents will be merged on-line with the academic expectations as the organizer. A teacher will be able to see how the standards are aligned or how the documents are aligned together with a timeline. By the time the Request for Proposals is issued, we do not have to have a final Core Content document, but we must settle on a design. There will be additional time beyond February to finalize the actual content of the standards.
- Question: Will the Department provide examples of best practice? Response: The intent is to get to that point. When the Department's Instructional Management System site is totally set up, there will be lesson outlines, units and other assistance documents to help teachers.
- Question: If the new assessment is to be given for the first time in the spring of 2007, then must this standards revision be completed by the spring of 2006? Response: Yes.
- Comment: To the extent possible, we need to communicate to parents and the public that the purpose of this is to make clearer what students will know and be able to do.

WRITING ASSESSMENT

Commissioner Wilhoit noted that Helen Mountjoy and Dorie Combs had attended part of the Writing Focus Group's meetings and Hilma Prather had attended them all. He emphasized that the Board needs a sense of where the Writing Focus Group is headed and today's discussion would jump immediately into the options they are considering. Nancy LaCount and Tricia Bronger were noted as being present and introduced as the facilitators for the Writing Focus Group. Ms. LaCount was asked to talk about areas of agreement that the Writing Focus Group has determined.

Ms. LaCount stated the Board would receive a packet of materials to study between now and the October meeting that provides much more detail on the options coming forth from the Writing Focus Group. She then shared the following areas of agreement:

- Writing must continue to be assessed and should be part of accountability, even though agreement does not exist on how this is to be accomplished.
- Writing should have performance levels similar to the other subject areas.
- Writing should be spread out across the grade levels.
- The writing assessment should still include on-demand writing but more choices of prompts should be offered. Also, the prompts at the middle and high school levels should require more analytical responses.

- A scoring procedure at the local level is valued but there needs to be a regional/state audit model.
- The audit process should be looked at from the standpoint of its procedures as well as for providing feedback on student learning.
- Professional development in writing must address both teachers and leadership.
- Students should continue to learn to write across a variety of genres.
- All of the models discussed began writing with the primary level.
- Accountability for all teachers across all grade levels should occur for writing.

The following questions/comments surfaced during this discussion:

- Comment: The writing portfolio requires a different set of skills than responding to questions within certain time constraints. This needs to be considered before the Board settles on a model for writing assessment.
- Comment: When this comes back to the Board in October and options are identified that Board members like, we need to make sure that the choices are founded in research and are best practices.
- Comment: The Board's decision must be valid and reliable and at some point the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability must be asked to weigh-in on the writing assessment.
- Question: Has the Writing Focus Group had any discussion about the implications of shifting responsibilities for writing across grade levels? Response: Yes, there has been discussion about how it will impact other teachers and is an issue that must be thought through.
- Question: Has the Group talked about academic writing? Response: Yes, they have discussed this in terms of real world writing.

TURNAROUND TIME FOR REPORTS: ON-LINE ADMINISTRATION AND REPORT DELIVERY AND IN-STATE SCORING

Commissioner Wilhoit had the following comments on the concept paper related to turnaround time:

- School people continue to articulate that CATS results are not back in time to provide diagnostic information and data to aid in placement decisions.

- The federal requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* requires we must get results back sooner.
- On-line assessment can be a means of getting results back sooner. Multiple choice can be turned around quicker than open response.
- A process of dual scoring will be used until the technology is developed for open response. Regional scoring will be a part of this.
- Consideration must be given to testing the system to see if the technology will work and if we can go large scale with on-line testing.

The following questions/comments were generated during the discussion on turnaround time:

- Comment: A concern exists as to whether using the computer to take the test could improve a student's results. This will have to be analyzed.
- Comment/Question: There are so many factors to consider, including the infusion of the dollars needed to do on-line assessment and the technical glitches that could occur. It must be determined if we want to go in this direction by February because it affects the Request for Proposals. If we do not succeed in this on-line administration, do we need a safety net if we cannot have it in place by the spring of 2007? Response: Different scenarios will be laid out for the Board's consideration. There is a great deal of work to do in this area between now and February. We may have to phase this in.
- Comment: Two issues exist, having up-to-date computers and also whether the system will carry the load to do on-line assessment.
- Comment: For the districts participating in the pilot, there needs to be a balance of both high performing and low performing districts.

Next, Commissioner Wilhoit pointed out a letter in the Board's meeting folder from the University of Kentucky about their interest in partnering with the Department to move the new assessment forward. Conversations with Lee Todd and Mike Nietzel on item development and scoring have occurred that would involve the public universities.

Chair Travis went on to let the Board know that Hilma Prather, Commissioner Wilhoit and himself will be meeting with President Lee Todd to discuss this partnership effort and said the Board would be kept apprised of the outcome of this meeting.

ARTS ASSESSMENT

Commissioner Wilhoit made the following comments about the concept paper dealing with arts and humanities:

- The areas of Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies are still in developmental stages.
- Actions in the Arts area may have to occur over the long term.
- The examination of the Arts and Humanities areas is an attempt to examine what we currently do and what would be the best way to assess these.
- Generally displeasure exists about how students presently respond in the assessment for the arts.
- The Department's Arts and Humanities Consultant, Phil Shepherd, is currently meeting with a group on the issues pointed out in the concept paper.
- We are not saying that we cannot adhere to the suggestions discussed in the concept paper immediately, but think some time should be scheduled for the Board to give direction in this area. If the Board feels this to be a worthy topic, it can be discussed in a more in-depth manner at a future meeting.

The following comments/issues were brought forward during the discussion on the Arts and Humanities:

- Comment: Support was expressed for having grades K-8 focus on appreciation of the arts and the high school to specialize.
- Comment: The first thing to do is to step back and decide if this Board reaffirms its commitment to assess students in the Arts and Humanities area and then say how these things reinforce learning.
- Comment: We are a country of multiple cultures and must have a way to expose students to those cultures.
- Comment: The Board needs to be better grounded in why it is important to keep this in the assessment before any policy decision is made.
- Comment: Assessment for Arts and Humanities counts half as much as other content areas.
- Comment: The Board does not have an option of whether to teach these things; the choice is in how to assess these and how much to count the areas.

- Comment: The concept paper has many more recommendations for the arts area than in humanities. Both need to be included in the next discussion.
- There seems to be a big knowledge gap among Board members in this area that needs to be rectified before any action is taken.
- Commissioner Wilhoit recommended that discussion in this area come back in December and assured the Board that the Department will not pursue an aggressive agenda in this area.

PRACTICAL LIVING/VOCATIONAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

Commissioner Wilhoit made the following points during the discussion on Practical Living/Vocational Studies:

- During the last contract negotiations for CATS, there was a request for vendors to bring forward a tool to measure Practical Living/Vocational Studies skills and only one submission came in. The question exists of where we want to go in terms of measuring Practical Living/Vocational Studies. There has been much more conversation about the seamlessness of the system than had previously occurred.
- The Individual Graduation Plan is a document carried by students into higher education and since the last Request for Proposals, some job specific assessments now exist.
- During the design of the last assessment, we put the best we had in place at the time but we need to step back now and look at the direction we want to go in this area.
- We could keep the assessment as is in Practical Living/Vocational Studies but we need to tie whatever we do in K-12 to transitioning into higher education.
- The first step in addressing this area would be to bring some folks together to discuss how assessment could best be done in Practical Living/Vocational Studies.

The following comments/questions were offered during the discussion on Practical Living/Vocational Studies:

- Comment: Support for looking at other ways of assessing Practical Living/Vocational Studies was expressed.
- Question: What is the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM)? Response: This tool inserts a set of judgments in the system to certify readiness for the workforce.
- Comment: The CIM is worth exploring but it should be the floor instead of the ceiling.

- Comment: Adult education should be at the table during this discussion.
- Comment: Many of these skills are observable behaviors and one model to consider would be the U.S. Army's checklist of behaviors.
- Some discomfort with this discussion was expressed because it was questioned whether schools should be required to teach these things. It was pointed out that there are a lot of challenges in teaching the content areas and perhaps not a lot of time should be spent on this area if there is not an easy way to assess it.
- The Individual Graduation Plan process needs improving and perhaps at the high school level if agreement could be reached on the skills that need to be assessed, the student could develop a portfolio type document as part of the IGP where teachers sign off on the acquisition of skills.

Commissioner Wilhoit brought the discussion to a close by saying again that he would like to convene a group to study and discuss this issue and come back with more specifics to the Board.

COMMENTS ON HEALTH INSURANCE BY SECRETARY VIRGINIA FOX

Secretary Virginia Fox addressed the Board on an announcement that was made this afternoon relative to employee health insurance. The highlights of her presentation were:

- Governor Fletcher announced this afternoon that the state's contribution for employee health insurance would be cut in half.
- Effective January 1, a 1% raise for state employees and teachers would go into effect combined with their regular increment increase of 2%.
- There will be three PPO plans.
- Lifestyle changes are embedded within the health insurance proposal.
- Contributions across the state will be equalized.
- The Board will receive the official press release and briefing on this issue.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Travis indicated that the Board's next meeting will occur on October 6-7. At this point, David Rhodes moved to adjourn the meeting and Dorie Combs seconded the motion. The motion carried.

